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METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY IN TEACHING WRITING

What Teachers Should be Aware of

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Abstract

This article explores the essential issues related to metacognitive strategy in teaching writing. Hopefully, it could contribute to improving teachers' understanding of metacognitive strategy, especially in teaching writing. Metacognition is so vital for students' learning as this ability encourages them to understand how they learn best and it also develop their self-learning skill. This process happens when students analyze tasks, set goals, implement strategies and reflect on what they are learning. Therefore, it is promising such benefits for students and teachers for it might contribute to develop their thinking skill. This article describes the concept of metacognitive strategy in teaching writing. Then it elaborates the appropriate learning activities to support the development of students' awareness of their thinking process about learning. After that it describes some challenges for implementing metacognitive strategy in teaching writing. Finally, it offers conclusions on the important point of the topic. The findings of the study suggest that Metacognition performs a key role in improving writing performance. Research on metacognition has shown that proficient writers are more aware of what they write, they make more decisions about planning and controlling as they write and they are more likely to self- evaluate their writing as they are more proficient than inefficient writers.

Keywords – metacognition, teaching writing, learning activities

Introduction

Writing reflects an interaction between writers and readers, and students may find it difficult to engage readers through composition. Writing is also a complex activity that requires cognitive resources; however, traditional writing instruction does not appear to prepare students to surmount these challenges and cultivate critical thinking skills around writing (Torrance & Jeffery, 1999).

Teaching students to be effective writers also does not appear rewarding for instructors (Hyland, 2004). Even with writing training, academic writing may still be difficult for students (Lilis & Scott, 2007). The main purpose of a strategic instruction is to integrate mental procedures to produce writing and to control the production of writing (Graham & Harris, 2006). Writers have a purpose for their writing and they adjust that

purpose for each task; this unique attribute is what make writers effective. Strategic writers use a variety of strategies and skills as they construct paragraphs (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014). These strategies are deliberate plans selected by the writer to accomplish a particular goal or to complete a task. Using writing strategies effectively help students become expert writers and achieve autonomy in writing, the goal of all writing instruction (Allison & Kaye, 2011).

Students usually find writing challenging, while teachers find it hard to assist students in producing pieces of quality academic writing (Okasha & Hamdi, 2014). Limited knowledge of students about the topic, insufficient practice, and inadequate feedback are some of the underlying reasons hindering production of quality academic writing (Chang,

2012). In addition, accuracy and correctness of grammar and writing mechanics tend to be the main focus on students language teaching (Ahmed, 2010). It is also assumed that student writers have negative attitudes and apprehension toward writing, as the writing feedback is seldom given, and in most cases, correction is mainly centered on grammatical errors, while the teacher serves as sole audience for students' writing. According to Amborse et al., (2010), the cause of weak writing skills includes poor attitudes that students exhibit toward writing, lack of confidence, and feeling of incompetence (Chohan, 2011).

Investigators concentrate on finding out how writing affect the performance of students, factors responsible for errors in students' composition, and how to get rid of them. It is argued that the lack of competence in written English results more from the lack of composing competence than from the lack of linguistic competence. Prominent reasons pointed out by Graham et al. (2012) for the inability in writing include: mechanical problems with the script of English; problems of accuracy of English grammar and lexis; problems relating to the style of writing required for a particular situation; and problems of developing ease and comfort in expressing what needs to be said.

Metacognitive strategies approach to teaching students is one of the contributing methods employed to help students overcome writing problems. Thus, the development of cognitive, psychology, and metacognition has drawn more and more researchers' attention and provides a new perspectives for EFL/ESL writing (e.g. Mohamed & Rashid, 2017; Goh, 2008).

There are many elements towards learning strategies, this study however

focus on describing the benefits of metacognitive approach. Metacognitive strategies are significant and viable for improving students' learning skills. Metacognitive strategies involve mental operations or procedures that learners use to regulate their learning. according to O' Malley and Chamot (1990), learners can be better in terms of proper planning, monitoring, and evaluation and practice of learning skills with the application of metacognitive strategies.

Metacognitive instruction

Educational institution has a primarily objective to prepare students' learning with the process such as planning, monitoring, and reflecting (Azevedo 2009), which are in the domain in the metacognition. However, scholars relate metacognition to other constructs like meta- learning, critical thinking and motivation (Schneider & Lockl, 2002). Further, most of the researchers agree upon three components to define metacognition: declarative metacognitive knowledge, cognitive monitoring, and regulation of strategies (Alexander et al., 2006).

Metacognition according to many scholars is a key factor for prediction of learning performance in the domain of problem solving include: identification of problem (Jacobse & Harskamp, 2012). According to Sternberg & Sternberg (2012), the steps to problem solving include: identification of problem, representation of problem, formulation of strategies, organization of information, allocation of resources, supervision and evaluation.

Hylland (2003) stated that the individual activity characteristic of the writing makes this process require to be taught by the teacher in assisting students to making meaning on the writing content. The role of the teacher is to foster students

metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies and provide opportunities metacognitive experiences in conscious thinking activities. To do this, teachers can first provide explicit instruction in a range of writing strategies; such as planning, text generating, feedback handling, and revising (Bai, 2015). The focus of metacognitive instruction is on the provision of explicit guidance to facilitate and support students' reflection, monitoring, and evaluation of the metacognitive processes so that students are aware of their deployment of metacognitive knowledge and strategies to bring about successful writing experience. Schraw, (2002) shows metacognitive task that provides students with opportunity to reflect on their strategy use at different stages of the writing process, which can not only promote strategy use but also enhance metacognitive awareness.

Metacognition is the cornerstone of the cognitive writing process, but metacognitive knowledge is also key to a genre approach to writing. Genre pedagogy focuses on explicit instruction in genre knowledge- namely task knowledge, such a knowledge of the target genre, its purpose, audience, and context of situation. Awareness of the readers and context of the target genre as well as the genre structure and typical lexicogrammatical features can enable students to use language effectively to make meaning for the right context and the right audience (Hyland, 2007). Explicit instruction alone, however, is inadequate to help students write. Even when students perform genre analysis and acquire genre knowledge explicitly, without the support and activation of metacognition, it is hard for them to apply genre knowledge to benefit their own writing (Yeh, 2015). As such metacognition instruction is crucial in facilitating the application of genre

knowledge. In metacognitive instruction, the focus is on the development of metacognitive knowledge with regards to genres, language use, purpose, audience, context, and so on, as well as metacognitive strategies (namely planning, monitoring, and evaluating) to improve writing. To this end, metacognitive tasks can be provided to students individually and/ or in a small groups.

The activation of metacognition is particularly effective when students work in social groups (Yeh, 2015). Metacognition in the writing classroom, can involve students in the use of metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies in socially situated activities, such as collaborative writing and peer feedback. When taking part in collaborative writing, students engage in problem solving, ensuing in collaborative dialogue (Swain, 2000). Students reflect on how best to use language to make meaning, during which they jointly deliberate on the use of grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and so on to convey the most appropriate meaning in context. Through this way, metacognitive knowledge is fostered. Such collaborative process can take place in peer feedback too, where students interact with peers as givers and recipients of feedback, during which metacognition can be developed. To provide metacognitive instruction, coaching has to be given to model productive collaborative processes (e.g how students can ask metacognitive questions about different aspects of writing), so that students can be turned into metacognitively strong writers.

Metacognition

The unique virtuosity of human is the ability to reflect on one owns' thoughts and experiences. Metcalfe (2008) asserts that the human ability on their owns'

thought is a result of metacognition which make it a difference with animals, as humans employ self-control on their action.

According to Downing et al. (2007) metacognition is thoughts about thoughts, knowledge about knowledge, or considerations about actions. It is distinguished from cognition in which cognitive skills those are vital to carry out a task, while metacognition is paramount to comprehending the way task was carried out (Beauchamp & Kennewell, 2010).

In a sentence, metacognition is the control of cognition. That is, learners have to connect this “metacognitive skills with their strategic knowledge about what they are aware of (declarative), how to put the knowledge to use (procedural), what period and the reason they can utilize the knowledge (conditional)” (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006). To show this concept, Pittinsky (2008) mentioned in his findings that young children have finite knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena or in their metacognition.

Flavel (1976) describes metacognition refers to knowledge and application of cognitive processes, which allows students to apply, monitor, and regulate strategy use; develop insight into their own strengths and weaknesses; and use such insight to improve their learning. the control, monitoring, and regulating aspect of metacognition is underscored as an important component of metacognition, which is made up of knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition (Brown, 1987).

To elaborate, at the forefront of metacognition is metacognitive knowledge, characterized in terms of three variables: knowledge of person, task, and strategy (Flavell & Wellman, 1977). Person knowledge refers to

knowledge of oneself including the cognitive processes and factors that may impact learning, such as age, language aptitude, interest, motivation, and self-efficacy (Wenden, 1998). Task knowledge refers to knowledge of the purpose, nature, and demands of learning task. Finally, strategy knowledge is knowledge of the strategies that can be used to achieve the cognitive goals of learning tasks as well as their effectiveness.

Metacognitive skills and strategies refer to the skills that students use to regulate the cognitive processes, such as overseeing, regulating, and directing the language learning task, and thinking about the process of learning (Zhang, 2010). During learning, students make use of metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning; they also select strategies, analyze their effectiveness, and change strategies when needed (Ridley et al., 1992).

Metacognitive experiences occur when learners draw on their metacognitive knowledge during cognitive tasks execution. Metacognitive experiences can be cognitive or affective, characterized in terms of judgements (cognitive) or feelings (affective) before, during or after a cognitive task. During a cognitive endeavour, while learner's metacognitive experiences are influenced by their metacognitive knowledge, their metacognitive experiences can further shape their metacognitive knowledge. Metacognitive experiences can also activate the use of new strategies whereby learners control, monitor, and regulate their cognitions. At the same time, metacognitive strategies engender the use of cognitive strategies that may led to the revision of their metacognitive knowledge.

Metacognition in Teaching and Learning

Language learning strategies are techniques to understand and remember information intentionally and controlled consciously by learner (Liyanage & Bartlet, 2013). They all have two groups of strategies in common, called *metacognitive strategies* and *cognitive strategies*. Every learner has different style to learn primarily due to various personalities and behaviours (Bada & Okan, 2000). Undoubtedly, one factor above others that has an important effect on EFL learners' different language skills is their style of learning. that is why the English learners of different styles hve their own strengths and weaknesses (Reid, 1995). Accordingly, the level of succes in each language skill (writing, speaking, reading, and listening) varies from one learner to another regarding their learning style (Sahragard & Mallahi, 2014).

The teaching and support of metacognitive skills in the classroom not only allows learners to learn more effectly, but it also improves cognition in all students at all levels of ability. As suggested in several studies (Slavin & Karweit, 2015; Zion, Michalsky, & Mevarech, 2005), learners' capacity to monitor and evaluate their learning processes determines the success or failure of collaborative group work.

Learning strategies involve specifications, behaviours, steps, or techniques, such as seeking out conversation partners or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task used by students to enhance their own learning (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). The approaches in teaching students the meatcognitive strategies include direct instruction, teacher modelling, and application. Like many other processes, metacognition can be taught to students, teachers should give a clear explanation about the strategies to be taught, why they are important and when students will need to use them.

Teachers also present a number of examples to illustrate their instruction (Armbruster, 2010). Other than giving a direct explanation, teachers can model the strategies by using the suitable techniques to show the metacognitive strategies should be used. The important point in this approach is that teachers would provide a model of the thinking process across the metacognition.

Metacognitive strategies in teaching writing

Firstly, Students hardly write and virtually everything they write is within the sphere of the classroom. The most vital tool in writing activities is that students need to be active in order to make the learning process of immense importance (Chutichaiwirath & Sitthitikul, 2017). Encouraging the student to take part in the exercise, at the same time improving performance and increasing writing proficiency requires a certain pragmatic approach. The teacher should be cristal clear on what skills he/she is attempting to improve.

Secondly, the teacher needs to select a pattern (or type of exercise) can aid learning in the desired field. Once the target areas and means of execution are stated, the teacher can forged ahead to focus on what topic can capture the students' attention and ensure their participation. By pragmatically putting together these objectives, the teacher can anticipate both zeal and viable learning (Danielson, 2013).

Methodology

This study employes systematic literature review (SLR) techniques suggested by Cooper (2010) to identify the relevant search terms and literature data bases. Several reliable journals online have been used as the principle data bases, and they were trawled since 2010 until 2015.

Articles were limited to metacognition and writing. Following initial searches, further filters were added so that the search was refined to focus on schools, teachers, classroom, and students. Articles for inclusion in this report were selected following abstract analysis.

An additional range of relevant texts providing helpful historical and policy contexts have also been used in this paper. Several texts were excluded from this report, as they did not reach the threshold for high-quality research; this was typically because the methodology was judged to be a conflict between the size of the research sample and the strengths of the claims being made.

Finding and Discussion

Metacognition performs a key role in improving writing performance. Research on metacognition has shown that less efficient learners do not identify the purpose of writing and channel their attention on word-by-word writing rather than writing performance for the task (Collins et al., 1989). Taggar and Neubert (2008) add that poor writing performers have longed finish writing the passage unaware that they have not comprehended the passage. In addition, poor writing performers are hardly able to improve their performance rate to fit the aim of writing (Woods, 2006). When they fail to grab the test, poor writers are not as pliant as a proficient writer in using different strategies to counter the problem (Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Corkery, 2014).

Proficient writers are more aware of what they write, they make more decisions about planning and controlling as they write and they are more likely to self-evaluate their writing as they are more proficient than inefficient writers. To ascertain the role of metacognitive strategies in writing, it is necessary to take into consideration the relationship

between cognitive and metacognitive strategies that a strategic writers employ. An efficient writer uses a wide range of cognitive strategies for accomplishing the writing tasks. Cognitive strategies have been created to assist learners to achieve their cognitive goal (Flavel, 1979).

Examples of cognitive strategies for writing might include brainstorming ideas, creating an outline, doing pre-writing, writing the first draft, writing sound sentences or proofreading for grammatical errors. Contrary to cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies have been designed to assess cognitive progress. Student writers employ metacognitive processes or strategies to plan their engagement in the writing process (Harris et al., 2003).

Writing as cognitive process

The writing process acknowledges the important role of the cognitive monitor overseeing the planning, translating, and reviewing process, as well as the metacognitive components of writing that enables learners to plan, monitor, evaluate the writing process (Hayes & Flower, 1980). In simple words, it is the metacognitive knowledge serves to control the process level of learning. Thus, metacognition helps students regulate their writing process by which of the metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies. Their metacognitive experiences, e.g. in the process of negative evaluation the organization of text, affected by their metacognitive knowledge, e.g. task knowledge, and new strategies may be activated, e.g. putting the cohesive devices to get the text organization coherence. It assists them in monitoring and regulating the cognition process and improving the writing process. Thus, metacognitive writing strategies are as follow:

Planning

Planning involves finding focus concerning purpose, audience, ideas, and strategies to be used among others. It often takes place before writing, but some writers also plan their compositions even while writing their composition. Planning writing is more efficiently done via whole-class or small group brainstorming. If done in a group, each student is recommended to have his/her function: idea generator, writer, or criticizer. However, planning can be done individually, too. The draft plan is made up, later in the process of writing, it may be reviewed and undergo changes concerning constituent parts (adding or omitting) and their order. Planning may also involve brainstorming some key words and choosing the basic tense for the writing piece.

Monitoring

Monitoring involves controlling the writing process while writing the text. It refers to checking and verifying progress in terms of global features, such as content and organization, and also in terms of local aspects such as grammar and mechanics. It can be more effectively done by individual writers.

Evaluating

Evaluating takes place after writing, and consists of reconsidering the written texts in terms of both global and local writing features, and also concerning the strategies used to complete the writing tasks. Evaluating is more effectively done in pairs (peer assessment): two writers exchange their papers and, having viewed them, discuss the improvements to be made. However, students need to be taught to do self-editing and correction, too. They need to develop a strategy for it (what to check first: content, structure of language, as it is confusing, especially for less experienced writers to do all three simultaneously)

Metacognition in Classroom Assessment Writing

Metacognition has a pivotal role to play in classroom assessment. Emphasizing assessment as a process of metacognition (Earl & Katz, 2006), teachers can encourage students to monitor and exert self-regulation over their thinking process and foster students' capacity to be their own assessors. Using assessment to promote learning, teachers help students play a proactive role in their learning, setting learning goals, asking metacognitive questions at different stages of writing; self-assess and self-monitor their learning progress; reflect on their learning; and make adjustment in their thinkings so as to achieve deeper understanding and to advance their learning. During writing, students apply and develop their metacognitive knowledge; employ metacognitive strategies to monitor and regulate their learning; and, based on their metacognitive experiences, revise their metacognitive knowledge to further enhance their writing.

During classroom writing assessment, teachers can activate students' metacognition by asking them to set personal learning goals and engage in ongoing self-monitoring. Metacognitive regulation and control then occur, where students adopt metacognitive strategies to achieve their learning goals. Also, students can act as learning resources for one another through conducting peer-evaluation, during which their purposeful dialogue can help one another improve their writing, and enhance their metacognitive knowledge. At different stages of writing, teachers can also encourage students to develop ownership of their own learning and writing through asking metacognitive questions. Students can keep their written reflection in a writer log and conduct self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

Specifically, classroom writing assessment can put an emphasis on raising learners' metacognitive awareness through the provision of mediation (Poehner & Lantolf, 2003). For instance, during teacher-student conferences, teachers can provide guidance to learners through oral feedback on their writing, asking metacognitive questions to help students learn and proceed in their zone of proximal development to foster their metacognition.

In metacognitive instruction, teachers can make students play an active role at writing conferences. Adjusting their feedback strategies according to individual student needs (Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995).

Conclusion

Metacognitively writing instruction does not have to wait until students go to college but can be provided to younger student at primary and secondary level. This article has unpacked the notion of metacognition, proposed an integrated framework that illustrates how metacognition may pervade the teaching-learning process, and provided examples to illustrate how metacognitive instruction can be implemented in the writing classroom. Although the metacognitive tasks suggested are designed for second language learners, they can also be applied to postsecondary contexts. It is hoped that through teachers' metacognitive instruction, students can be empowered to become self-regulated and independent writers, which is a fundamental goal of education, particularly in the 21st century.

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Kampus
Merdeka
INDONESIA 2020

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

NO: 5434/UN37.1.2/TU/2021

WE HEREBY RECOGNIZE

Rika Riwayatningsih

as a Presenter of

The 4th UNNES-TEFLIN National Conference: "Engaging L2 Learners in Remote Learning Environments"
held by English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang

June 19, 2021

Dean of
Faculty of Languages and Arts



Dr. Sri Rejeki Urip, M.Hum.
NIP. 196202211989012001



SURAT TUGAS

Nomor: 107 /C/FKIP-UN PGRI/VI/2021

Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

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Menjadi Pemakalah *Call Paper* dengan judul "*Metacognitive Strategy in Teaching Writing: What Teachers Should be Aware of*" pada acara: 4th UNNES-TEFLIN National Conference: "Engaging L2 Learners in Remote Learning Environments" yang dilaksanakan pada:

Hari : Sabtu

Tanggal : 19 Juni 2021

Penyelenggara : Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni
Universitas Negeri Semarang

Demikian surat tugas ini dibuat untuk dilaksanakan dengan penuh tanggung jawab. Atas perhatian dan kerja samanya disampaikan terima kasih.



Kediri, 14 Juni 2021

Dekan FKIP,

Dr. MUMUN NURMILAWATI, M.Pd.